

Remarks

Entry of this amendment and allowance of all remaining claims are respectfully requested. Upon entrance of this amendment, claims 1-5 & 14-20 will remain pending.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowability of claims 8 & 21 if rewritten into independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Responsive to this indication, the allowable subject matter of claims 8 & 21 is written into independent claims 1 & 14, respectively. Thus, independent claims 1 & 14 are believed allowable, as well as the claims which depend therefrom.

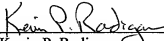
With respect to the 35 U.S.C. §101 rejection to claims 14-16, the rejection is believed moot in view of the amendment submitted incorporating the subject matter of claim 21 into claim 14. Additionally, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection since claim 14 as originally submitted recites an independent, *hardware interlock device*. This device is a hardware device, and as such, claim 14 recites other than software, *per se*. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §101 rejection to any extent deemed applicable to amended claim 14 is respectfully requested.

As noted, Applicants have herein amended the independent claims to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claims 8 & 21. These amendments are not intended as an acknowledgement that the previously pending claims 1-7, 9-11, 13-20, 22-24 & 26 were unpatentable over the art cited in the final Office Action. Rather, the present amendments and cancellations are presented only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue the canceled subject matter and other claims in one or more continuation and/or divisional patent applications.

All claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

If a telephone conference would be of assistance in advancing prosecution of the subject application, Applicants' undersigned attorney invites the Examiner to telephone him at the number provided.

Respectfully submitted,


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